TO THE

King's Most Excellent Majesty;

Together with the Honourable

Lords and *Commons* Assembled in Parliament:

The Husbandman's Advocate.

Most Excellent *CÆSAR*,

AND

Most Honourable and Renowned Senators of *England*,

UNder God, you have saved Your Selves and Your Country; and as many of us as have learn'd to distinguish between the True and the Living God, and those false Deities which grow in our Woods and our Quarries, we return you our due and eternal Thanks. Under God, you have secur'd us from *Popery* and *Slavery*; Secure us but once more from *Poverty*, and your Work is done. Present His Majesty as Long and as Much as your Wisdom shall think fit, our *Purses* are open, and our *Hearts* are so too: Only permit the *Honest* **Husbandman's Advocate** (like a *Publick Mercury*) to point out the way how to obviate the Inconveniencies of too much Plenty. This Paper humbly presents,

That the Price of Land, and the Product of it, is now so very low, is the common Grievance and Complaint; the Solution whereof is very nice, and strange, whenas Plenty should be accounted a misfortune, and full Barns an inconvenience. They that look into the Causes, some lay it upon the Interest of Money, some upon the paucity of our Inhabitants,

bitants, occaſion'd by War and Plague, and ſo many Foreign Plantations and Colonies; others upon the extraordinary Improvement of Husbandry, and breaking up ſo many Parks and Chaces, and dreining of Fens; and they that ſay we ſpend too much Wine and exotick Liquors, beſides the dry Drunkenneſs of Tobacco, do think they are not altogether miſtaken; not to mention the too good Opinion of the Manufactures of Strangers, and too little Kindneſs for our own. Whether theſe, or any, or all of theſe, do contribute to this Epidemick Evil, is not now the Subject of this preſent Paper: but that ſuch a miſchief there is gradually crept in upon us, and, like a ſly Hectick Feaver, hath ſeized upon the very Vitals, and grown almoſt paſt recovery before diſcern'd.

That the Soil we tread upon, is not ſhrunk in its Dimenſions, but in its ſubſtantial Value and Reputation, is too well known, eſpecially to the unfortunate Seller, and made uſe of by the indigent and crafty Tenant, who either demands deep Abatements, or elſe threatens to throw up your Lands. The Country-man tells us, and we ſee it with our Eyes, How he neither ſpares his Pains nor Sweat, endures the Cold and Heat of both Seaſons; contents himſelf with his Country-fare and Ruſſet: The Dews of Heaven fall upon him, and his Fields do laugh and ſing with Plenty; and yet for all this, when he caſts up his Account at the years end, it betides him alike with the Prodigal and the Slothful; he looks into his hand, and there is nothing; and the cauſe of all is, That the Fruits of his Ground and Labours afford no Price, no Profit proportionable to his Rent and Charges, and to what he might juſtly expect as a Reward of his Induſtry: From whence how long and how ſad a Chain of Miſeries muſt inevitably enſue, we need neither Prophet nor Diviner to inform us.

Many honeſt *Eſſays* indeed, and ingenious *Idea's*, how to obviate this General Poverty, have come out of late; but,

but, alas! with ſo little ſucceſs, becauſe they are either too ſhort, or too narrow, or elſe attended with other Inconveniencies as obnoxious almoſt as thoſe they pretend to remove: Now then, to make haſte to the Mark we aim at, *This New Evil is curable by the Royal Hand.*

If it would pleaſe the Auguſt Government of *England* to deal with the Fruits of the Earth, as the King doth with Men and Metals; both which, tho' of mean Extraction, he advances many times to Honour and Reputation, meerly upon the Account of his Sovereignty: The One he advanceth to Dignities, and Places of the greateſt Truſt; and the Other he enobles with his own Royal Effigies; and as an Inſtrument of all Commerce and Traffick, he makes it countervail whatever the World produces. If the Government would be pleaſed to advance the Price of our own Native Corn, the buſineſs would be done in a moment, and all things reduc'd to the moſt flouriſhing Condition that either We or our Forefathers were wont to glory of. If Wheat might not be ſold under Two and thirty Shillings a Quarter, nor Barley under eighteen, immediately our Lands, Farms, Farmers, Landlords, Noblemen, and ſo to the upmoſt Rounds of all Orders, the King himſelf, would be by one Fourth-part at leaſt Richer than now they are.

And to prevent all Objection, let the Nation be caſt into Three Ranks of Men; that is to ſay, The *Noble*, the *Middle*, and the *Loweſt* ſort: No man can ſuppoſe, that thoſe of the higheſt Order can diſlike the Deſign, but rather infinitely deſire and abet it, as being all Landlords; As for the Middle ſort, moſt of them are Farmers themſelves, or ſuch as have a great dependance upon them: ſo that when that day comes, they will doubtleſs keep it as a Jubile to all Generations: And for the Loweſt, they are ſuch by Age and Infirmity, or ſome other unſeen Misfortune; and for theſe, the Laws and Chriſtian Charity hath provided: But for the Lazy and the Spendthrift, their Objections will beſt be anſwered at the Houſe of Correction.

Now, if any moroſe man ſhall haſtily cry out, That this Deſign is not practicable, becauſe without a Precedent, and ſo with one froward Negative be their Own and their Countreys Enemy ſo far; let them know they are miſtaken, as not underſtanding the True Nature and Power of Sovereignty. What will they ſay, when they hear or read, That the *Roman* Senate, to eaſe the publick Neceſſity, by a Decree, made the Half-pound of Copper as much worth as the Pound; and a while after, the Quarter, and at laſt the Ounce, was valued as high as the Pound was at the firſt; and this applauded and conſented to by the Tribunes? What ſhall we ſay of the *Perſian* Sophy, who by virtue of his Sovereignty, annually ſets the Price upon his Pearl, being the product, not of a *Whale*, or of a *Leviathan*; but bred and born in the Belly and Cottage of an *Oyſter*? Can the *Chineſe* ſo mightily magnify his *Thee*, or the *Japonian* his *Cha*, of ſhrubby off-ſpring; the latter of which, if *Tulpius* was not miſinformed, hath been ſold for a Hundred pounds the pound? Who knows not how great an eſtimate the *French* King puts upon his Salt-pits, and how much his Lillies did once flouriſh upon it, even to a fault? Do we not ſee Stones and Shells made dayly the Ornament and Companion of Princes, not for any intrinſick value of their own; but only by the Indulgence of our Fancies, *Natura Lapides fecit, Opinio Gemmas*? Shall ſuch things as theſe, made more for Delight than Neceſſity, and which the World could ſpare, Salt only excepted; Shall ſuch little gay things weigh down our Gold and Silver, and ſit ſo high in our opinions; And ſhall Bread, which is the ſtaff of our lives, and the happy product of our Fields, be ſo generally undervalued? Shall Bread, which is obtained every year by the indefatigable Induſtry and Sweat (it may be) of Millions of our people? Shall Bread, which indeed this year lies under the Clods, but the next runs through all our Veins, and is turned into our very ſelves? Shall Bread, which we dayly pray for

twice,

twice, and sometimes thrice in an hour, before we have it, and when enjoyed, shall we put so mean a price upon it, only because Heaven is pleased to give it us with both hands? Certainly, besides the impolicy of it, there seems to be ingratitude and irreligion in the Case. These few things therefore are humbly propounded to our Wise and Renowned Superiors.

1. Let it be consider'd what was truly said of old, *Res quælibet tantum valet quantum vendi potest*, tho the use and goodness of many things are known by a Mark or Signature impress'd upon them by Nature; yet nothing is born or produced with its price engraven upon it, but is left to the determination of Mankind, to whose delight and necessity they are all subservient. Were all *England* set to Sale (which God forbid) what measures would the Purchaser take, before he would strike the Bargain? Doubtless he would inquire into the fertility of the Soil, the nature of the Product; but most of all, what profit he could make of it. Tho the Globe were never so rich, and the growth of it never so good, yet profit still is the Pole-star he steers by, when he knows that a good Market is that which blesses all the Territory round about it. If all the Corn of *England* be cheap, the Land that bore it will be so too; and then what shall we think of those Landlords, but as Men contemptible and crest-fallen, when we know that two lean Premises can never make a fat Conclusion?

2. Let *England* be consider'd as one great Farm, whose main concernment lies in Tillage, which will manifestly appear; 1*st*, Because all the Pasture and Marsh-lands, all the Heath, and Wood-lands, bear no proportion to the Arable Land of *England*. And 2*dly*, because Husbandry employs more Hands than any Calling whatsoever, and it may be as many as all the Callings in *England* put together. Now it is but reasonable that that which is the greater part

of

of the Country, and which keeps the greater part of the Nation employed, ſhould be kept up in its full value and reputation. From hence it will eaſily appear, how great an eſteem we ought to have of the Husbandmen of *England*; the rather, when we call to mind, how that among the *Egyptians* of old, it was accounted a capital Crime to kill a Plowing Ox; and the reaſon is given, becauſe he is *Socius Coloni*, the Husbandman's Companion in the Culture of the Earth. According to the teſtimony of the Ancients, *England* was always eſteemed a rich Store-houſe and Treaſury of Corn: *Zozimus* calls it, *Occidentalis Imperii quaſi horreum & Cellam penuariam*, The Granary of the Weſtern Empire, and whence Eight hundred Ship-loads of Corn were annually tranſported to *Germany*, to nouriſh the Frontier-Soldiers; and long before that, in the Judgment of *Orpheus*, it was eſteemed for its fertility of all ſorts of Grain, the proper Seat and Manſion of *Ceres* her ſelf. And if ſo many Hundred years ago, this Iſland was ſo famous for its plenty and fruitfulneſs, What may we now think of it, when the Art of Husbandry is ſo much emproved, and ſo many Woods and places of pleaſure and divertiſement removed to give place to the Plow? Now after all this, that ſo much Art, and ſo many Experiments have ſucceſsfully been made, it will be an infinite diſcouragement to the moſt induſtrious, and far more numerous part of the Nation, if ſome proportionable reward and price might not be allowed in ſo great a concernment, in which ſo much Art, Coſt, Labour and Neceſſity, do all joyntly conſpire.

3. Might this Propoſal be accepted, and effectually proſecuted, it would undoubtedly prevent one great Miſchief, which if common report be true, is practiſed, eſpecially in the City of *London*, which is, that Brewers, Bakers, and others, do combine together, concerning what Price they pleaſe; ſo that when the honeſt Countrey-man hath brought up his Corn to the City, the Market immediately falls upon him,

him, who partly through Neceſſity, and partly for the great Charge and Trouble of carrying it back again, he is forced to ſell it at what Price ſo ever they pleaſe to give him; nay, many times, at a lower Rate than he might have had at home among his Neighbours. Whence it is, That a few men in Cities and Towns, are daily ſeen to grow abundantly Rich; and in the mean time, by ſuch illegal Combinations, multitudes of men in all the Counties of *England*, grow moſt miſerably poor. Certainly great pity it is, to ſee a few men, that live in ſoft eaſe and delicacy, by a few crafty Tricks, to acquire vaſt Eſtates in a few years, whilſt Thouſands of honeſt and working men, who perhaps after 40 or 50 years hard Labour and Care, do many times wiſh for a Grave, becauſe they are in danger of a Priſon.

4. If it were poſſible that the Opinion of every individual Man of the Nation, could be taken, it is very probable, that a hundred would be in favour of this deſign, for one that ſhould appear againſt it; becauſe all that have Land, and uſe Land, would be for it; moſt of the Traders and Shop keepers would be no leſs, as having Commerce with both thoſe, as eaſily foreſeeing how their Trade would quicken upon it; ſo that of neceſſity the Diſſenters muſt doubtleſs be infinitely far leſs in Number and Quality, than the former. Now then, Whether it be better Policy, and more of Juſtice, to gratifie the moſt and beſt part of the Nation, than the feweſt and meaneſt, will eaſily be determined.

5. The Courage and Fortitude of a Nation, uſually bears proportion with the Wealth of it; the Poor and the Slave are not ſenſible of the ſhame of Cowardice; and our wiſe *Rawleigh* tells us, The Body of our Victorious Armies was made up of the free Yeomen of *England*, and their Sons: We are a Nation that have been, and ſtill are happy, even to envy, ſo long as Plenty and Wealth, like *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, ſhall be undivi-

undivided: We are not like the *Nomades* of old, who were contented with Skins and Mares-milk; but a Nation ranged into several Orders and Scales of men. Honour must be supported by large Fortunes: And our Annals tell us what great things our Ancestors have done in the World, to whose Memory we are indebted to do the same, when occasions are offered; and all this presupposes a proportion of Wealth, which is impossible, unless the Credit of Land be maintained, which is our common Nurse, as well as Mother, and by which the King Himself is supplied.

Last of all, Such an Expedient as this, will retrieve the old and famous Hospitality of *England*; the Nobles, Gentry, Farmers, and Tradesmen, with the ingenious Artificers, by a most happy and concatenated Interest, like the great Intelligences, will keep this our *English* Orb in a most Natural and Thriving Motion, when Money, like the healthful Blood in our Veins, shall still circulate by a just and happy Distribution. The Landlord shall be hospitable, because his Tenant is solvent; and the Tenant will be so, because his Landlord is Noble, and Bountiful to his Neighbours; City and Country shall friendly conspire by mutual Commerce, and the whole Nation with one joint Acclamation, shall Cry out, *God and the King*: *God*, that gives the Crop, and the *King* the Price.

God save the King and Parliament of England.

So Prays,

The Husbandman's Advocate.

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